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The Door











Chapter 1 by Randompeepur

The girl walked limply, her hand clutching the music sheets. Her steps were slow, eyes glued to the floor, and lips forming a scowl on her small face. Aurum didn't bother brushing strands of her hair away from her face, and merely walked in a straight line. With every breath she took, there would be a small sigh exhaled.

There were no students around since after school clubs were cancelled due to the heavy rainstorm. The school had been afraid of keeping the students in due to a notice of flood, but Aurum couldn't care less about the warnings and decided to stay after school. She wanted to show her music teacher the piano masterpiece that she had created and perfected for months, excited to hear the praises that her favorite teacher would sing for her; instead, she got a scowling face and words that pricked her heart. Her teacher had told her that she lacked emotions and soul, something that Aurum was always lacking in. Not only that, her teacher had also lectured her of staying after school during the heavy rainstorm, and had kicked Aurum out.

The embarrassed girl had hurried off from the class, walking in a straight line. She had no umbrella and the only option for her was to stay in school and wander around until the storm

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and not to mention, the suspicious placing of the door. Usually, there would be a blank wall, but it was covered with a huge door.

Something was wrong, Aurum thought to herself. Her curiosity was starting to build up, and she slowly ran her fingers over the wooden door, trying to get a feel for every carvings. A door like this would cost a lot, Aurum thought.

The shiny door knob was luring her in, and there was no keyhole that Aurum could use to peek. Hesitantly, her fingers grabbed the door knob and turned it slowly.

Chapter 2 by Maria D



Pink sakura petals flew past my face and disappeared into gold dust in thin air as wind blew on my face.

"It's locked."

Flinching, Aurum let go off the doorknob, turning her head sharply to the direction of the voice. She recognized the girl immediately. Prim, one of the seniors who was infamous for countless of stories around school. They'd never talked before, mostly because their paths didn't cross often, but also because Prim wasn't someone Aurum was supposed to be talking to if she didn't want to get in trouble.

Despite the rumors surrounding her she was, as always, dressed sharply, her school uniform on point and her long, wavy hair curled neatly over her chest.

"I'm..." Only after starting talking, she realized she didn't even know what she wanted to say. It was something quite unusual for her, since she was normally confident and outspoken, but being caught like this, when least expected, made even Aurum speechless.

"Weird, isn't it?", Prim said, ignoring Aurum's stuttering. "I never noticed it before, even though I pass by here all the time."

"Me neither.", Aurum said eventually, finally able to form proper thoughts again. "I just saw it for the first time."

"Actually, I was looking for someone who could help me open it, but seems like literally everyone left." Prim shrugged. "Well, except for you."

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When the door silently opened inward, Aurum exhaled in surprise. The room, that she saw, was empty. Though, she couldn't even call it a room.

She saw a white space. No ceiling, no floor, no walls. More surprising was the music stand, which stood in front of the doorway. She wasn't even sure that it stood. It seemed that the stand just hovered in the air. Aurum noticed that it was similar to the one in her music class. The same brown darkened varnish, the same crack on the column.

Aurum turned to Prim. Senior raised her eyebrows, showing that she was surprised, but it seemed unnatural. Moreover, Aurum had a feeling that Prim was trying to keep a smile off her face.

For a few seconds both girls listened only to the sound of rain, silently looking at each other. Finally, Prim said, nodding at the notes in Aurum's hand, "Are you rehearsing something?"

"No... I wrote this." Aurum was confused by this question. Her sheets seemed insignificant in comparison with the strange door. She looked again at her work and remembered Mr. Simmons' words. "Nothing special," Aurum added with sadness.

"So, you don't really need them?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Well, look at this stand. In my opinion, the only thing that it lacks, are the sheets." Prim spoke impatiently, as if she was explaining something obvious to a child.

Aurum hesitated and looked again at the result of her long and hard work.

"Come on, what are you afraid of?"

Prim continued to convince her, but Aurum didn't listen anymore. She dreamed that she would put these sheets on the old music stand in her classroom. That one day the whole school band would be playing her work, with Mr. Simmons as the conductor. While waving his arms in a

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Aurum took a breath and turned to her. "Thanks. You seemed to know that the door would close."

"Woman's intuition, I guess." Prim shrugged her shoulders. "We should check if it's locked."

Aurum turned the knob and pushed the door. It opened, showing the girls a completely new picture.

"It worked," Prim smiled.

Chapter 4 by Dan Ramazan



It was inexplicable. But Aurum still felt a slight disappointment, especially after white emptiness. She saw an accurate reflection of what surrounded both of them. Black school fence, wet asphalt, gray sky. She stretched out her hand through the doorway and felt the raindrops beating on her palm.

"What are we waiting for? Umbrella, of course, wouldn't hurt, but you can't always get what you want." Prim went up to her.

"I don't understand. Where are my sheets?"

"Are you serious? Is this the only thing that surprises you in this door? That's boring."

"I mean, if we'll come in, the same can happen to us. If the door closes, we'll also disappear."

"Here," Prim propped the door open with her backpack. "Come on, let's see what's going on in there."

Aurum held her breath, closed her eyes and stepped forward. Prim followed her. Nothing happened. Aurum made a few steps and looked again at the door. It was still open. Soon, her curiosity overcame her fear. They walked around the building, hoping to find at least some differences from the real world. But very soon they got wet and ran under the roof of the porch.

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"No, no, no. Where is your love of adventure?" Prim looked at Aurum's grim expression and added, "Let's wait for at least ten minutes. Maybe the rain will stop, or something will happen?"

She looked around and muttered under her breath, "Although, it's unlikely. Maybe it really was 'nothing special"."

"Did you say something?"

"We need to pass the time." Prim ignored the question and smiled. "Let's start with you. Tell me something. Tell me about your music, for example."

Aurum hesitated, but Prim showed such genuine interest, that she began her story. "Have you ever seen the movie "Everybody's fine"? Grandfather wants to bring his family on holidays together. But they didn't come. So he takes a trip across the country to visit them. And, well, when I felt lonely, I wanted my grandfather to do the same thing." She stopped and looked at Prim, waiting for a mockery, but senior continued to listen. "And that's what my music is about. It's a suite of different parts for each member of the family." Aurum said, trying to finish her story as quick as possible.

"How does it begin?"

"Well, first the piano, a sad melody, like lonely rainy evenings, and then country part starts with an entrance of acoustic guitar. If my grandpa would drive up to the school gate, something like that would play from his old Chevrolet. And then..."

"Stop! Don't spoil the story," Prim laughed and ran to the gate. Aurum, surprised by her words, ran after her. She walked out of the gate onto the narrow road that separated the school and the local diner. Prim stood at the edge of the road.

"Why did you..?" Aurum didn't finish. She couldn't believe her ears. The sound of raindrops, falling on the roofs of buildings, on the cars parked nearby, on the asphalt under her feet, formed into melody. Her melody. "I onely rainy evenings."

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"What are you talking about?" Prim asked, looking around impatiently for Chevrolet.

"The melody. It repeats itself. Just listen."

"Yes, the same thing I heard when I walked out the gate. I thought that was the idea." The smile came off Prim's face, and she turned to Aurum.

"No. The piano part should have ended half a minute ago."

Aurum looked at the road: it was empty. She listened to the tune. The first part of the suite started playing for the third time.

"Any idea, why the second part doesn't start?" She asked Prim. There was no trace of joy in senior, she hugged herself, trying to keep warm, and looked worried.

"Why would I know?" Prim surprised.

"Come on, I already realized that you've done this before. You knew perfectly well what was going to happen when I put the sheets on the stand." Aurum was irritated by Prim's feint.

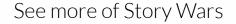
"Well, since we are already here..." She sighed, gathering her thoughts. "Just don't get mad, ok? I've been here before. Just once. I wrote a story and the door appeared, with an empty bookshelf inside. So I put my story on it. But everything went right. Exactly, as I wrote."

"Why didn't it work now?"

"I don't know! You did the same thing as I did." She spread her hands. "And, after all, we are inside your melody."

"So, you have no idea what should we do?"

"We can wait."



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"Aurum?"

Aurum stopped and turned to Prim. "What?"

"I'm sorry. I didn't plan to drag you in. I... I came to put my story in there again. When I first entered this door... I just wanted to do it again."

"And?"

"There was no door. I checked the place several times, knocked on it, thought, maybe some mechanism shows it if you press on the right brick. I stood there like a fool for an hour and a half. And when I was about to leave, I saw you. And you saw the door. It all was an accident. I didn't plan it."

"You could at least warn me."

"Would you believe?"

Aurum didn't answer, realizing that Prim was right.

"It's ok. Perhaps, the door thought that my work wasn't good enough." Aurum chuckled. Her anger passed. Their whole conflict now seemed funny. "I mean, it sucks that my sheets were rejected for the second time today, but this little adventure was amusing. And we are going home, right?"

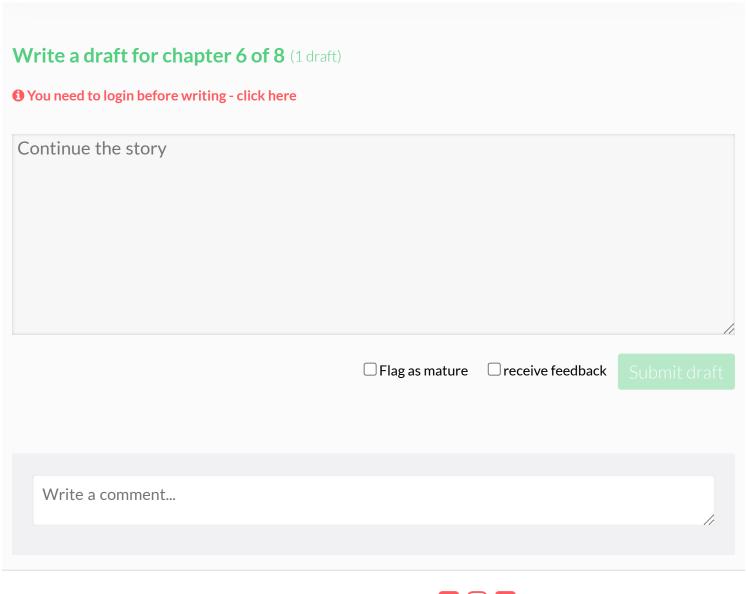
Prim smiled. They already walked around the building, and now they were separated from their return only by the porch of the back door of the school.

"No. If the door would think badly of your music, it wouldn't appear in the first place." Now, when they made peace, Prim was already guessing what went wrong. "The reason is different. If only we could figure out..." She didn't finish and stopped.

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